

ARECACEAE

Balaka samoensis Becc.

Balaka siliensis Christoph.

SAMOAN NAME: *māniuniu* (a generic name)

ENGLISH NAME: none

STATUS: rare Samoa endemic

REASON FOR LISTING: rarity of collections

SUGGESTED ACTION: Not much can be done for this palm, which is vulnerable because it has been reported only from the lowlands. It should be looked for in any mid-elevation forests on Savai'i in any surveys done there. Recommended for the Red List of Samoan plants.

Endemic to Samoa, where it occurs in foothill forest on Savai'i, reported from 300 to 450 m elevation. It is called *māniuniu*, which is a generic name for species of *Balaka*. No local uses have been reported. It is very similar to *Balaka brachyclamys*, which apparently occurs on 'Upolu and Savai'i, and the two may be conspecific. Further collecting and study is needed.

Small palm up to 5 m in height, with glabrous stems. Fronds pinnately compound, alternate, rachis red-brown pubescent (when young), longitudinally striate, up to 1.5 (?) m long, leaflets in up to ca. 13 or more alternate pairs, 20–50 cm long, attenuate at the base and up to 1 cm wide there, angled-truncate and coarsely serrate at the tip; surfaces glabrous, upper side darker, veins parallel, prominent; margins entire; leaflets sessile. **Inflorescence** a widely branching, many-flowered axillary panicle up to 72 cm or more in length when in fruit, with spaced clusters of flowers in 3s (2 in uppermost ones), 2 males and 1 female proximally, only male flowers distally. **Calyx** of 3 broadly ovate, rounded sepals up to 2 mm long at anthesis, expanded and up to 5 mm long in fruit, imbricate, sessile. **Corolla** of male flowers comprising 3 valvate, greenish, acute-tipped, narrowly oblong petals 1–1.4 mm long, reflexed at maturity; corolla of female flowers comprising 3 imbricate, broadly ovate petals 1–1.3 cm long, blunt at the tip but with a small mucro, persistent, chartaceous at maturity. **Ovary** simple, 1-celled, stigma clavate, on a wavy style; reduced to a pistillodes in male flowers. **Stamens** many, white, with versatile anthers ca. 3 mm long; reduced to 6 staminodes in female flowers. **Fruit** a red ovoid drupe 2.8–4.2 cm long, irregularly several-ridged when dry. **Flowering** and fruiting probably occur throughout the year.

Distinguishable by its small palm habit; pinnately compound leaves; leaflets serrate and truncate at the tip; sepals of fruit less than 7 mm long and wide; and fruits 3–4.2 cm long with several irregular ridges when dry. It differs from the similar *Balaka brachyclamys*, which has shorter fruits. It differs from *Balaka taitensis* and *Balaka tuasivica*, which have much smaller fruits, petals, and sepals.



SAVAII:

Christophersen 3260—Foothill forest
above Sili at 300 m elevation.

Christophersen 3266—Foothill forest
above Sili at 300 m elevation.

Bristol 2291—Foothill forest above
Gātaivae at 350–450 m elevation.

Bristol 2293—Foothill forest above Gātaivae
at 350–450 m elevation.

SINE LOC:

Whitmee 4 (7?)—Without further locality.